

California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program

A Project of the Public Health Institute and the California Department of Health Services

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT – JANUARY 1999

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ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

February 1, 1999	Comments on Risk Evaluation Guidelines due
February 16, 1999	Meeting between program staff and contractors on reliability
February 22, 1999	Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) First Meeting
February 23 and 24, 1999	Stakeholders Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting
March 5, 1999	Department of Health Services New Office Open House **Please note this event was postponed from January**

- Due to the many meetings taking place near the end of February, the next EMF Program newsletter will be sent out in early March, and will cover the months of February and March.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Stakeholders Advisory Committee Meetings

This year's first Stakeholders Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting was held on Wednesday, January 13, 1999. The purpose of this meeting was to have a presentation on the methods used in and preliminary outcomes of the Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) Program School Policy Project, and provide the stakeholders with the opportunity to make comments on the project. Max Henrion and Keith Florig demonstrated the model software that they developed for this project, answered questions about the assumptions incorporated into this model, and agreed to make several additions and changes suggested by the stakeholders to improve the final product. Action items from the meeting were distributed to SAC core members and minutes will be distributed soon.

The next SAC meeting will be held on February 23 and 24, 1999, in the program's new office building at 1515 Clay Street in Oakland, California. At this meeting, Detlof von Winterfeldt will demonstrate his distribution line model and Michael Yost will present a progress report on his occupational exposure project. Also, this meeting will include a significant discussion following up on concerns about the management of the program that were raised by stakeholders at a telephone conference dedicated to these issues on January 7, 1999. Action items resulting from the January 7, 1999, telephone conference were sent to SAC core members via electronic mail. These action items will also be distributed along with the full minutes of both meetings and the agenda for the February meeting in the next regular program mailing, which is scheduled for the first week of February.

Role of SAC in Scientific Peer Review

Dr. Neutra has promised to write a description of the Department of Health Services' (DHS's) vision of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee role in scientific peer reviews. This description will be the basis of a discussion at the February 24, 1999, SAC meeting.

Risk Evaluation Guidelines and February SAP Meeting

Comments on this document from the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) and the SAC are due by February 1, 1999 at noon. Program staff will then sort the comments and distribute them to the Advisory Panel members. Staff will also review the comments and prepare to respond to them at the February 22, 1999, SAP meeting. This will be a major activity for program staff in early February. *All SAC members are welcome to attend the SAP meeting, which will take place in Training*

Room F on the second floor of our office building at 1515 Clay Street.

Pauline Roccucci Resigns Over Indemnification Concerns

Pauline Roccucci, a core member of the Stakeholders Advisory Committee, recently resigned from the SAC because of concerns about indemnification of members of state-appointed boards and committees. Ms. Roccucci says that if DHS's lawyers interpret the recent opinion of the California Attorney General as indemnifying SAC members she will rejoin the committee. If she does not rejoin, Raymond Neutra proposes to ask Towards Utility Rate Normalization (TURN), which had a representative on the committee in the past, to rejoin. If they refuse, Dr. Neutra will ask for a representative of the California Manufacturers Association.

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PROGRAM UPDATES

Oncologists

Dr Neutra has begun the search for two oncologists to present to the SAC, which will then select one to appoint to the Scientific Advisory Panel. He hopes to have identified the candidates in time for the February SAC meeting so an oncologist can begin attending the SAP meetings in April.

EMF Program Staff Meet With Members of the California Public Utilities Commission

On Monday, January 25, 1999, members of the EMF Program staff met with staff at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to discuss the format and contents of the program's annual report for 1998. Topics of discussion at this meeting included the structure of the report, the progress of various research and policy projects, and the program's plans for the next year.

Finance Subcommittee

In response to requests by SAC members during the telephone conference earlier this month, EMF Program staff will be

talking to the SAC Finance Subcommittee soon about ways to resume regular budget reporting to the committee members. The goal of this discussion is to get recommendations from the subcommittee on ways to incorporate the SAC into the distribution of reports that are already being produced for internal use. This will enable program staff to ensure that SAC members get information on the program budget routinely, without the need to produce a separate report.

Forthcoming BEMS Meeting.

At the request of the California EMF Program, the next Bioelectromagnetics Society (BEMS) meeting will be held in California to coincide with the conclusion of most of the program's extramural research. EMF staff and contractors have submitted over 15 abstracts for this meeting. We are now collecting copies of the abstracts and will include them in the next SAC mailing.

PROJECT AND PROJECT-RELATED UPDATES

PROJECT UPDATES:

Epidemiology Workshop

The Epidemiology Workshop took place as planned on January 14-16, 1999, at the Radisson Hotel in Berkeley. All scheduled speakers and discussants participated, and they were joined by many observers, including stakeholders and DHS epidemiologists. Program staff are now preparing a summary of the discussion periods, and the authors have been asked to review and complete their draft manuscripts. All materials will then undergo independent peer review supervised by the BEMS editor. When the materials are accepted for publication as Workshop Proceedings, we will distribute preprints.

Prospective Epidemiological Study

As anticipated in the previous newsletter, Dan Bracken's team of subcontractors to Kaiser has begun analyzing exposure data collected from over 1,000 pregnant women. The following table displays the summary time-weighted average exposure statistics (in milligauss) resulting from this study.

Category	N	Mean	St. dev.	G. Mean	G. St. dev.
Home	1039	1.69	1.79	1.20	2.20
In Bed	957	1.80	4.48	0.83	2.90
Travel	922	2.20	4.86	1.60	1.91
Work	657	1.86	3.51	1.08	2.53
Other	738	1.66	2.25	1.15	2.37
24-hour	1043	1.78	2.18	1.28	2.09

Staff consulted with Dr. DeKun Li and Dan Bracken to develop a metric that defines exposure "episodes" and makes it possible to keep track of their number, intensity, and duration. This will allow a determination of the percent of milligauss hours contributed by different types of episodes, such as short episodes of high exposure, long episodes of medium-level exposures, and other types.

Reliability

As discussed at the end of the January 13th SAC meeting, Dr. Neutra has arranged a meeting for February 16, 1999 with Professor Detlof von Winterfeldt, Phil Pettingill of the Independent System Operator, and Mr. Pettingill's reliability consultant to develop a set of proposed analyses of reliability. This meeting will take place from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., location to be announced, and is open to stakeholders. The results of this will be presented to the staff who keep reliability data for the Modesto Irrigation District and San Diego Gas and Electric. These parties will attempt to agree on a scope of work and a plan for completing the analyses. This will then be shared with the other utilities for comment.

Dr. Neutra hopes to complete this process by the February 23, 1999, SAC meeting, but doing so depends on the time availability of the various parties involved.

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PROJECT AND PROJECT-RELATED UPDATES (CONTINUED)

MORE PROJECT UPDATES:

Disease Variables for Power Grid and School Policy

Modules

Staff will begin developing proposed sensitivity analyses for several variables, for use in the power grid and school policy projects. These variables are: the degree of certainty that EMF is a causal factor, odds ratios for various diseases, disease and mortality rates, and mixture mitigation efficacy. The goal will be to highlight the possible policy dilemmas. We hope to have the proposed default values by February 23, 1999.

Power Grid Policy Analysis

Professor von Winterfeldt has requested a no-cost extension to complete his power grid policy analysis project. The new deadline for completion is April 1999.

RELATED UPDATES:

Net Current Detection in Schools

At the request of Raymond Neutra, Karl Riley has prepared a protocol for detecting net currents in electrical panels. This protocol has already been reviewed by practicing school electricians, and will be sent to the stakeholders and the Enertech contractors for comment.

Electrocution Study

Dr. Mark Miller, former representative to the SAC from the Academy of Pediatrics, is serving a year as a resident in preventive medicine. He is analyzing California mortality and hospitalization data from the early 1990s related to electrocution from the power grid and other sources. His report should be available in a few months. This project is at no cost to the EMF program but may be of interest to stakeholders.

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* Please send E-mail for these staff to the general EMF address temporarily. Most staff will be getting individual E-mail addresses in the near future. Updated copies of this list will be included in future newsletters.